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ABSTRACT

Eighth grade students' knowledge of the principles involved in career choice was investigated to determine whether sex stereotyped attitudes about jobs were present. Scores from the career development section of the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Tests were analyzed for 734 (379 females; 355 males) eighth grade students. The career development section lists 20 objectives covered by the categories of self-understanding, education, work and occupation, and decision making. Eighth grade girls indicated a greater knowledge of principles involving careers than did eighth grade boys. Girls achieved significantly higher scores on 5 of the 20 objectives: recognizes how the ability to get along with people affects getting, keeping, and advancing in a job; how personal characteristics may help or hinder work on the job; that one is responsible for one's own actions and decisions; recognizes how friends can influence personal decisions; and that career planning decisions are justifiable. Of the four categories, girls answered correctly significantly more items than boys in self-understanding and decision making. In the other categories girls correctly answered more items but differences were not significant. The study indicates that the curriculum apparently has not adversely affected females in their development of concepts and knowledge involving careers. (KC)

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT TEST SCORES OF EIGHTH GRADE BOYS AND GIRLS

1982

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INTRODUCTION

As school systems analyze that part of their curriculum that deals with career choices, career awareness and career education, the problem of sex stereotyping in relationship to jobs and careers is an ever recurring problem. In a society where the world of work has been male-dominated and where certain jobs have been sex-oriented, there has been concern for a careful examination to determine the extent of sex stereotyping in curricula and curricular materials.

There is evidence which indicates that sex stereotyped attitudes exist in our society as a whole and also in our schools. In the schools this stereotyping has been found in the way students have been taught. Britton (1973) conducted an investigation to determine if sex stereotyping existed in reading materials for grades 1-10 and if a majority of the stories showed one sex in a dominant role. His findings provided evidence of sex stereotyping in assigning major career roles. Males dominated in this category as much as three to one. Other reports, where curricular material was studied, found similar results. Also, studies such as Reha and Nappi (1975), Schlossberg and Goodman (1972) and Shinar (1975) found that students of various age levels expressed sex stereotyped job preference or sex stereotyping in job roles.

This expression of sex stereotyped job preferences may be the result of societal attitudes and job expectation. If this is true, then perhaps sex stereotypes in relationship to careers may change as students grow up in a society where there is a rapid change in attitudes toward and knowledge of the woman's role in the world of work. This study was conducted to determine if there were differences between boys and girls of the early adolescent age group in reference to their knowledge of principles involving careers.

The data for the study were compiled from scores on the Career Development section of the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Tests. The Georgia Criterion-References Tests were developed in the 1974-75 school year by the Georgia State Board of Education in conjunction with the Educational Testing Service. They were first administered in April, 1976. These tests, given on the fourth and eighth grade levels, measure three areas: reading, mathematics, and career development.

The career development section of the test which was used in this study was designed for eighth grade students. It is divided into two test forms (Form 1 and Form 2). Each of these forms contains four major headings: Self-understanding, Education, Work and Occupation and Decision-making. The two forms of the test are planned so that items and objectives of the tests will be randomly and evenly distributed among the students. Table I gives the objectives of the test, the test form in which this objective is measured and a description of the objectives.

Insert Table I

The student tests are scored on the basis of the number of correct responses. This measures achievement on each objective. The student's achievement status for a particular objective is based either on the number of questions answered correctly, or, in some instances, on the response patterns of items measuring the objective. The results indicate whether a student has met, or failed to meet, each of the objectives.

Procedure

The subjects for this study were 735 eighth grade students from the Douglas County school system. Douglas County is located approximately 25 miles west of Atlanta, Georgia. It has a rapidly growing population, growing from 12,173 in 1950 to well over 60,000 by 1980. It has urban areas as well

as rural areas. The population is approximately 90% white and 10% black. The 735 eighth grade students represented those students who attended the four middle schools of Douglas County and took the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Test during the spring of 1980. Of these students, 379 (51.6%) were female and 355 (48.4%) were male. A further breakdown indicated that 183 males and 202 females were given Form I of the test, while 172 males and 177 females were given Form 2 of the test.

Table II shows the number of students, by sex, who satisfied each of the twenty objectives of the test.

Insert Table II

Chi-square values were computed to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between males and females in relationship to satisfying the 20 objectives concerning career awareness. Table III gives these results.

Insert Table III

From Table III, it may be seen that in five objectives there was a significant difference in the scores with respect to sex (Objectives 2, 3, 7, 9, and 20). These differences were all in favor of the females.

For the four categories of the test (Self-understanding, Education, Work and Occupation and Decision-making), the mean number of items answered correctly by males and females was determined. Table IV gives this information.

Insert Table IV

In order to determine whether there were differences according to sex in relation to the number of items answered correctly in each of the four categories, analyses of variance were computed. Table V gives these results.

Insert Table V

From Table V it can be seen that on two categories, self-understanding and decision-making, there was a significant difference between boys and girls in relation to the number of items answered correctly. This difference was in favor of girls, suggesting that they have greater knowledge in these two categories than do boys.

CONCLUSIONS

From the information gained from the data of this study, eighth grade girls indicated a greater knowledge of principles involving careers than did eighth grade boys. On five of the twenty objectives of the career development section of the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Test, girls achieved significantly higher scores than did boys. On thirteen of the other fifteen objectives, girls achieved higher scores, although the differences were not significant at the .05 significance level. With respect to the four categories of the career development section of the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Test, on two of the categories girls correctly answered significantly more items than did boys. On the other two categories, girls correctly answered more items, but the differences were not significant.

The data of the study gives no information as to why girls indicate a greater knowledge of principles involving careers than do boys. The fact that at the eighth grade girls are more socially mature than are boys must be considered. Also, the reading profile of boys versus girls at this age level indicate that girls have a higher reading level than do boys. These reasons could partially explain why these differences in knowledge concerning careers favored girls.

Another possible reason why eighth grade girls may have a greater knowledge of the principles involving careers may be that these girls have

spent their developing years in a society where the woman has become ever increasingly involved in the world of work and media and education have given emphasis to this change. Perhaps present early teen age girls have developed a greater awareness of the woman's role in the work world than had their counterpart of a generation ago.

Even though critics have critized the school's curriculum and curriculum materials as being sex role stereotyped, this study indicates that this curriculum, and its supporting educational materials, did not apparently adversely affect females in their development of concepts and knowledge of principles involving careers.

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TABLE I

Objectives of the Career Development Test According to Test Form Number

OBJECTIVE	FORM NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
		Self-Understanding
1	2	Can identify characteristics of self-confidence which may insure success or failure.
2	1	Recognizes how the ability to get along with people affects getting, keeping, and advancing in a job.
3	1	Recognizes how personal characteristics may help or hinder work on the job.
4	2	Recognizes how self-confidence influences personal goals.
5	2	Recognizes that certain things about a person can change and that such changes can affect what that person does in school or on the job.
6	1	Recognizes that work is part of the way people live and that, by planning one's career, a person can improve and/or change the way one lives.
7	1	Understands that one is responsible for one's own actions and decisions.
		Education
8	1	Recognizes that career goals in many occupations are achieved only through experience and/or additional training.

OBJECTIVE	FORM NUMBER	DESCRIPTION (Continued)
9	1	Recognizes that different occupations require different kinds of educational preparation and that there may be different ways of arriving at the same occupation.
10	2	Recognizes that there is a wider variety of educational and occupational opportunities for those who complete high school and advanced specialized training than there is for those who do not complete high school or who lack training in skills.
11	2	Demonstrates knowledge of skills that are important in obtaining a job.
12	2	Recognizes that a person is influenced in some manner by every school subject one encounters and has some knowledge of how school work can be used in everyday life, including a job.
		Work and Occupation
13	1	Is familiar with several major sources of vocational and educational information and is able to judge how accurate, reliable, and helpful those sources of information are.
14	2	Recognizes some of the ways certain occupations and skills become more or less in demand or are created by changes in the world around us.
15	2	Recognizes that within an occupation area (cluster), there are a wide variety of career choices.

OBJECTIVE	FORM NUMBER	DESCRIPTION (Continued)
16	1	Can recognize some of the characteristics of various occupational fields, such as chance of advancement, opportunity to be active or to work alone, that could influence a person's career choice.
		Decision-Making
17	1	Recognizes how various experiences, such as leisure-time activities, volunteer work, and part-time jobs, can be useful in choosing educational and vocational goals.
18	2	Recognizes what a person's present decision has to do with reaching one's long-range goal.
19	2	Recognizes how a person's friends can influence one's personal decisions.
20	1	Can justify important decisions and choices people must face when they plan their careers.

TABLE II

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SATISFYING

EACH OBJECTIVE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

ON THE

GEORGIA CRITERION-REFERENCED TEST

OBJECTIVE	TOTAL NUMBER	ACHIEVED OBJECTIVE		MISSED OBJECTIVE	
		MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
1	351	131(7 .7%)	147(82.6%)	42(24.3%)	31(17.4%)
2	383	134(73.6%)	167(83.1%)	48(26.4%)	34(16.9%)
3	383	143(78.6%)	181(90.0%)	39(21.4%)	20(10.0%)
4	351	129(74.6%)	136(76.4%)	44(25.4%)	42(23.6%)
5	351	145(83.8%)	144(80.9%)	28(16.2%)	34(19.1%)
6	383	131(72.0%)	162(80.6%)	51(28.0%)	39(19.4%)
7	383	129(70.9%)	173(86.1%)	53(29.1%)	28(13.9%)
8	383	139(76.4%)	154(76.6%)	43(23.6%)	47(23.4%)
9	383	143(78.6%)	174(86.6%)	39(21.4%)	27(13.4%)
10	351	129(74.6%)	148(83.1%)	44(25.4%)	30(16.9%)
11	351	141(81.5%)	150(84.4%)	32(18.5%)	28(15.7%)
12	351	118(68.2%)	124(69.7%)	55(31.8%)	54(30.3%)
13	383	142(78.0%)	173(86.1%)	40(22.0%)	28(13.9%)
14	351	118(68.2%)	130(73.0%)	55(31.8%)	48(27.0%)
15	352	110(63.6%)	123(68.7%)	63(36.4%)	56(31.3%)
16	383	133(73.1%)	144(71.6%)	49(26.9%)	57(28.4%)
17	383	157(86.3%)	182(90.5%)	25(13.7%)	19(9.5%)
18	351	125(72.3%)	133(74.7%)	48(27.7%)	45(25.3%)
19	351	124(71.7%)	150(84.3%)	49(28.3%)	28(15.7%)
20	384	143(78.1%)	179(87.1%)	40(21.9%)	22(10.9%)

TABLE III

CHI-SQUARE VALUES IN RELATIONSHIP TO OBJECTIVES

MALE VERSUS FEMALE COMPARISON

OBJECTIVE	CHI-SQUARE	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
1	2.11	.1456
2	4.53*	.0333
3	8.80*	.0030
4	.08	.7824
5	.33	.5644
6	3.48	.0620
7	12.32*	.0005
8	0.00	1.0000
9	3.74	.0532
10	3.38	.0659
11	.30	.5847
12	.03	.8578
13	3.70	.0543
14	.77	.3814
15	.82	.3656
16	.04	.8422
17	1.33	.2492
18	.16	.6876
19	7.41*	.0065
20	7.63*	.0057

*Significant at the .05 level.

TABLE IV

MEAN NUMBER OF ITEMS ANSWERED

CORRECTLY BY CATEGORY

CATEGORY	MEAN SCORES	
	BOYS	GIRLS
Self-Understanding	15.41	16.39
Education	10.78	10.97
Work and Occupation	6.71	6.87
Decision-making	8.56	9.19

TABLE V

F-VALUES WITH RESPECT

TO TEST CATEGORIES

CATEGORIES	F	SIGNIFICANCE OF F
Self-Understanding	10.938***	.001***
Education	.444	.505
Work & Occupation	.837	.361
Decision-making	12.921***	.001***

***Significant at the .001 level.